

Message Text

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21

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7908

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, LI, US

SUBJECT: STEPHEN TOLBERT'S DEATH IN AIRCRASH: PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S
REQUEST FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE

1. DURING MY MEETING WITH HIM ON NOVEMBER 3, PRESIDENT TOLBERT SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A REQUEST TO US GOVERNMENT ON A MATTER OF GREAT PERSONAL IMPORTANCE TO HIM -- THAT OF DETERMINING TO THE MAXIMUM DEGREE POSSIBLE THE FACTS SURROUNDING THE DEATH OF HIS BROTHER STEPHEN IN AN AIRCRASH NEAR GREENVILLE ON APRIL 28. HE SAID THAT AFTER THE DIVISION OF CIVIL AVIATION HAD FILED ITS REPORT, HE HAD APPOINTED A SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE TO REVIEW AND EVALUATE THE FINDINGS. HE SAID HE WAS NOT COMPLETELY SATISFIED WITH EITHER REPORT. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE PAST ASSISTNCE USG RENDERED IN INITIAL INVESTIGATION OF THE CRASH. HOWEVER, IN THE ABSENCE OF THE MISSING ENGINE THERE WAS NO SURE WAY OF ASSESSING RESPONSIBILITY OR OF ABSOLUTELY RULING OUT FOUL PLAY. PRESIDENT TOLBERT CONTINUED THAT HE HAD INSTRUCTED FONMINISTER DENNIS TO ASSEMBLE THE REPORTS AND TO MAKE A FORMAL REQUEST FOR HELP FROM THE US GOVERNMENT.

2. WHEN I SAW FONMINISTER DENNIS ON NOVEMBER 7 HE GAVE TO ME THE FOLLOWING AIDE MEMOIRE AND HANDED ME COPIES OF THE ACCIDENT REPORTS:

QTE: THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF
LIBERIA WISHES TO RECALL TO THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED
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STATES OF AMERICA THAT THE MESURADO CESSNA 401-EL-AFC

AIRCRAFT WHICH CRASHED ON MONDAY, APRIL 28, 1975, OFF THE COAST OF GREENVILLE, SINOE COUNTY, TRAGICALLY CLAIMING THE LIVES OF SIX LIBERIANS, INCLUDING THAT OF THE LATE HONOURABLE STEPHEN ALLEN TOLBERT, MINISTER OF FINANCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, AND YOUNGER BROTHER OF THE PRESIDENT, IS STILL A MATTER WHICH WEIGHS QUITE HEAVILY UPON THE HEARTS OF THE LIBERIAN GOVERNMENT AND ITS PEOPLE.

BASED UPON THE INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED (SUBSEQUENTLY SUBMITTED IN A REPORT, COPY OF WHICH IS ATTACHED) BY THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND TRANSPORTATION, DIVISION OF CIVIL AVIATION, TO DETERMINE THE ACTUAL CAUSE OF THIS CRASH, AND A REVIEW OF THE ACCIDENT REPORT BY A SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE (COPY OF WHICH IS ALSO ATTACHED), IT IS THE TENTATIVE CONCLUSION OF THE LIBERIAN GOVERNMENT THAT, UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE MISSING RIGHT ENGINE OF THE PLANE IS RECOVERED FOR THOROUGH INSPECTION, THE POSSIBILITY OF FOUL PLAY BY AS YET UNATTRIBUTABLE SOURCES CANNOT BE COMPLETELY RULED OUT.

BECAUSE OF THE RAINY SEASON, HARSH DIFFICULTIES WERE IMPOSED UPON THE EFFORTS TO RETRIVE THE MISSING ENGINE. WITH THE ENSUING DRY SEASON AND THE MORE FAVOURABLE WEATHER CONDITIONS, HOWEVER, IT IS HOPED THAT THE TASK OF ATTEMPTED RECOVERY WILL BECOME EASIER. YET, IN VIEW OF THE LIMITATIONS OF EQUIPMENT AND REQUIRED EXPERTS TO CONDUCT SUCH AN UNDERWATER EXPLORATION, AND IN CONSIDERATION OF THE FRIENDSHIP EXISING BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND LIBERIA, THE GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA WISHES TO REQUEST OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES FURTHER ASSISTANCE BY MAKING AVAILABLE THE NECESSARY EXPERTS AND EQUIPMENT TO AID IN THE RECOVERY OF THE MISSING ENGINE IN AN EFFORT TO ESTABLISH DEFINITIVE REASONS FOR THE CRASH OF THE AIRCRAFT.

NOVEMBER 4, 1975, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS UNQTE.

I REPLIED THAT I DID NOT KNOW WHETHER WE HAD EXPERTS AND EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE TO ATTEMPT TO LOCATE THE MISSING ENGINE, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HOW SUCCESSFUL SEARCH OPERATIONS MIGHT BE AFTER THE LAPSE OF TIME SINCE THE CRASH, OR WHAT THE COST MIGHT BE. I SAID I WOULD TRANMIT GOL REQUEST TO WASHINGTON FOR CONSIDERATION.

3. COPIES OF THE AIDE MEMOIRE AND ACCIDENT REPORTS HAVE BEEN POUCHED TO AF/W.
MANFULL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Authority: greeneet
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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To: STATE
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